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CONFIDENTIAL

POLICY PLANNING STAFF

10th Meeting

Tuesday, March 14, 1950
11:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Present: Paul Nitze
Ware Adams
Lampton Berry
George Butler
John Davies
Dorothy Fosdick
Robert Hooker
Robert Joyce
Carlton Savage
Harry H. Schwartz
Robert Tufts

Willard Barber, ARA
John Hickerson, UNA
Richard Scammon, R
Walter Schwinn, P
Willard Thorp, E

Sr. Muñoz Marin, Governor of Puerto Rico
Dr. Rafael Picó, Chairman of Puerto Rican Planning and Urbanization Board

Governor Muñoz Marin explained that he was in Washington primarily to try to gain acceptance in Congress of his idea of having a constitution for Puerto Rico. He explained that it was not a matter of gaining any more powers for himself or freedoms for his people, but rather of formalizing and placing on a

on a "respectable" basis the status of Puerto Ricans as American citizens, i.e. of establishing a statutory basis, by consent of the people, for the connection between Puerto Rico and the United States which exists now--but which exists now under the terms of an organic act passed by the Congress of the United States. His idea is that the people of Puerto Rico should by their vote say whether or not they wish to remain a part of the United States, whether or not they want a constitution, and what it is they would like to have in the constitution. His own idea is that such a document would give the Puerto Rican legislature the right to pass bills subject to approval of the American Congress with the proviso that anything not acted upon by the American Congress during one session would automatically become law. The constitution would meet three requirements: (1) it must contain a bill of rights, (2) it must be republican in form, and (3) it must contain nothing that in any way contravenes the Constitution of the United States. Governor Muñoz said that actually a constituent assembly composed of his best friends would not give him as much power as he had now because that power was designed for an appointed governor and had not been changed

been changed since he was elected. The procedure would, however, in his opinion, provide a variant of how a first-class federation can expand with great flexibility while preserving the real freedoms of the people who become a part of it. He added that such an experience might break the ground for many variants of this type throughout the hemisphere, but that to give expression publicly to such an idea at this time would do harm to the concept as it would lend ammunition to those who insist on calling the United States imperialistic.

He explained that the nationalism of the Puerto Ricans consisted of a love of their island, their homes, and the familiar surroundings which they know; that it was not a chauvinist expression applied to geographical boundaries. In answer to a specific question as to why the Puerto Ricans did not want full independence from the United States he replied forcefully and clearly that Puerto Rico was a part of the independence of the United States and he saw no reason why the independence which the people of Puerto Rico enjoyed (and which would be made even more clear by the type of constitution which he proposed) should be limited by the shoreline of the Islands. He felt, rather, that it should extend not from one end of the Island to the other but from one end of the

of the Island to San Francisco. He referred to the Havana Conference of a year or two ago in which fourteen Latin American states debated at some length colonialism in the Western Hemisphere and discussed Puerto Rico in this context as though it were a colony of the United States. He said that Puerto Ricans do not need "liberaters" of this sort, as was made clear by a unanimous resolution adopted by their Legislature at the time. The Governor added that Puerto Ricans could express themselves more clearly to other Latin American states on this point if they had a constitution which made their freedom legal and clear. He felt also that Puerto Rico could be very helpful to the United States in the latter's relations with other American states and pointed out that Puerto Rico is, in essence, a Latin American community composed of citizens of the United States. It is more akin to the United States than the other Latin American countries; it is more progressive than the other Latin American countries; it is a place where all Latin Americans feel at home and where people from Indiana do not feel as though they were in a foreign land.

He touched briefly on the recognition policy of the United States vis-a-vis certain Latin American governments and said

and said that, although he understood that we must carry on business with whatever government is in power in a given state, it would be advantageous to all concerned if the Organization of American States could come to an agreement to withhold recognition from any government which came to power by force unless that government within a short, specified period held an honestly free election to choose a government that would have the support of the majority of the people. He expressed great faith in the will of people and suggested that in most dependent and backward countries it may very well be that the oligarchy who profess to speak for the people are the cause of most of the trouble and lack of progress. He said in talking to some citizens of a Latin American state recently he asked what objections there would be to holding elections which would be run for example by one Puerto Rican, one Uruguayan, and one citizen of another state (not the United States). The reply was, "Well, the Colonels would not like to have foreigners here." Then the Governor asked if they would consider such people foreigners to democracy as well as foreigners to that particular country, and on receiving a negative reply, he suggested that "the Colonels" were the real foreigners.

He said

He said that on the Island of Puerto Rico there were 300 communists and that he thought, considering the intense poverty of the great mass of the population, this was a most significant fact.

In answer to a question the Governor and Dr. Picó said that the Caribbean Commission was of value in calling the attention of the administering powers to the needs of the people. Puerto Rico did not gain much from it as she was more advanced than the other members; but it gave the Puerto Ricans a sense of pride and accomplishment to be able to contribute technically and otherwise to the advancement of neighboring areas of the Caribbean.

He said that there were a number of professors from other Latin American countries in the University of Puerto Rico and that he would like to see more as the eyes of many of them were opened by what they saw in Puerto Rico as compared to what they had heard. Some of them came there, unfortunately, because things had become too hot for them at home but others were able to return to their countries and he felt that their reports must be of great propaganda value to the United States. For this same reason he hoped that Puerto Rico could play a large and definite part in the Point IV Program of the United States with respect to Latin American.

With regard

With regard to the problems raised by nationalism in South East Asia and other parts of the world, he said that he did not pretend to have an answer; but, on the other hand, he could not help but feel that the example set here in this Hemisphere by the relations between the United States and Puerto Rico, in particular, held a possibility of one day permeating to other areas of the world.

During the discussion the Governor mentioned that it might be of use if there were some Puerto Ricans in the U.S. Diplomatic Service.

S/P - Mr. Nitze

March 3, 1950

S/P - Harry H. Schwartz

Before George Kennan left it was decided to ask the Governor of Puerto Rico, Sr. Munoz Marin, to meet with the Staff during his previous visit to Washington in January. He had to return hurriedly to Puerto Rico and the meeting was cancelled. In the meantime, Eddie Miller spoke to him in Puerto Rico about the desire of the Staff to meet with him, and he is in Washington now with that expectation in mind. Consequently, George Butler and I felt that we had no choice but to arrange a meeting and this has been done for 11:00 a.m., Tuesday, March 14.

This is a scheduled S/P meeting time, but if you cannot be present, George Butler can act as host and chairman. Mr. Butler believes that the most value from the meeting can be obtained by asking the Governor the following:

1. His views about the problems of nationalism and colonialism and possible approaches to solutions;

2. The role that Puerto Rico could play in inter-American affairs.

S/P:HHSchwartz:sg
S/P:GHButler